

Health Disparities Legislative Bills

To understand the strides that the state has taken and the work left to do to reach health equity for all Marylanders, here is a compiled list of legislative bills enacted from 2000-2020 and a selection of bills introduced in 2021.



2021 Current Legislative Session

These bills have been introduced and have not been passed into law.

- ☐ **House Bill 28-** (Introduced) Would require health professionals to undergo implicit bias training prior to renewing their license or certificate to practice.
- ☐ **House Bill 78-** (Introduced) The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021 would create the Maryland Commission on Health Equity.
- ☐ **Senate Bill 565/House Bill 309-** (Introduced) Would require the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities with the Maryland Health Care Commission to publish a health disparity policy report card and compare this data against the state's population by demographic.
- ☐ **House Bill 915-** (Introduced) Would establish a workgroup on Black, Latino, and other underrepresented mental health professionals.



2020 Legislation

- ✓ **Senate Bill 502/1208-** Required the **Maryland Department of Health** to implement a pilot program to provide certain mental telehealth services through the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to a patient in the patient's home setting.

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2015-2019 Legislation

- ✓ **House Bill 116**- Required local correctional facilities to conduct an assessment of the mental health and substance use status of each inmate using evidence-based methods to determine if a certain diagnosis or medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction is appropriate.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 356/House Bill 583**- Required the Maternal Mortality Review Program with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to make recommendations to reduce disparities in the maternal mortality rate including those related to social determinants of health.
- ✓ **House Bill 1001**- Prohibited placing minors in restrictive housing, otherwise known as “solitary confinement,” unless there is clear and convincing evidence of an immediate threat to the safety and security of inmates and staff.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 233/House Bill 111**- Required the **Maryland Department of Health** to meet its constitutional obligation to provide inmates with adequate and timely medical care.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 266/House Bill 716**- Required the **Maryland Health Care Commission**, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and Vital Statistics Administration to conduct a study on the mortality rates of African American infants.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 598/House Bill 797**- Required each correctional facility in the Division of Correction to have a written policy and procedure in place to provide a sufficient supply of free menstrual hygiene products to incarcerated women.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 340/House Bill 1225**- Required the University of Maryland Center for Health Equity with the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** to convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations to units of State and local government on laws and policies.

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- ✓ **Senate Bill 503**- Required each health occupations board established under the Health Occupations Article to report an update on specified efforts to educate individuals regarding racial and ethnic health disparities.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 853/House Bill 860**- The Maryland Equal Access to Food Act of 2017 which repealed antiquated barriers that prevented persons who have been convicted of certain offenses from accessing temporary cash assistance or food stamps.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 198/House Bill 580**- Required the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to provide specified health occupations boards with a list of recommended courses in cultural and linguistic competency, health disparities and health literacy.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 321**- Required the Baltimore City and Baltimore County police departments to establish behavioral health units who are specially trained to understand the needs of individuals with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders.



2010-2014 Legislation

- ✓ **Senate Bill 1065/House Bill 856**- Required the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** and the Maryland Insurance Administration to establish a specified stakeholder workgroup on workforce development for Community Health Workers.
- ✓ **House Bill 668**- Required the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** and the **Community Health Resources Commission** to give special consideration to community-based applicants when certifying applications for income tax credits for each health enterprise zone employer.
- ✓ **House Bill 1404**- Requires certain health care professionals to complete continuing education, including on health care disparities, cultural and linguistic competency, and health literacy.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 234/House Bill 439**- Established the Maryland Health Improvement and Disparities Reduction Act of 2012.

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- ✓ **House Bill 641**- Required the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** to coordinate with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to develop a plan to address Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C viruses that disproportionately affect minority populations.
- ✓ **House Bill 679**- Required the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to work collaboratively with public health, social work, allied health, pharmacy, and health education university programs to create courses focusing on cultural competency and sensitivity.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 291/House Bill 114**- Required health occupations boards to collect specified racial and ethnic information and, to the extent practicable, that members of health occupations boards reasonably reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, and cultural and gender diversity of the state.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 855/House Bill 929**- Required the **Maryland Health Care Commission** to establish a Patient Centered Medical Home Program for the purposes of reducing health disparities.



2005-2009 Legislation

- ✓ **House Bill 756**- Established a voluntary Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Program and tasked the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** to develop a method by which each licensing board may recognize the training received by health care providers.
- ✓ **House Bill 1240**- Established a Task Force that is staffed by the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** to study health disparities among minority children with learning disabilities and make recommendations to the Governor based on its findings.
- ✓ **House Bill 905**- Required institutions of higher education to evaluate their programs that promote and enhance cultural diversity, and prepare reports to their respective educational governing bodies on the status of the programs.
- ✓ **House Bill 942**- Required universities and colleges of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and other health care professional training programs to develop courses

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that address racial and ethnic disparities in health care access, utilization, treatment decisions, quality, and outcomes.

- ✓ **House Bill 524**- Established a workgroup on cultural competency and workforce development for mental health professionals.
- ✓ **House Bill 788**- Allowed health insurers to collect information about an individual's race and ethnicity in order to evaluate quality of care outcomes and performance measures.
- ✓ **House Bill 793**- Established a Statewide Steering Committee on Services for Adults with Sickle Cell Disease.
- ✓ **House Bill 58**- Required the **Maryland Health Care Commission** to evaluate the outcomes and performance of certain health plans and facilities and to collaborate with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to publish a Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 230/House Bill 322**- Established the Nurse Support Program Assistance Fund.
- ✓ **House Bill 1127**- Established a Statewide Commission on the Shortage in the Health Care Workforce within the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**.
- ✓ **House Bill 1295**- Cultural Competency Workgroup to develop recommendations for requiring cultural competency instruction as part of an individual's licensure or license renewal process.
- ✓ **House Bill 1273**- Expanded existing task force and charged it with identifying and making recommendations on treatment disparities and developing a joint protocol to be used by the **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration** and the **Mental Hygiene Administration**.

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2000-2004 Legislation

- ✓ **Senate Bill 177/House Bill 86**- Established the Maryland Office of Minority health and Health Disparities.
- ✓ **House Bill 433**- Established the Task Force on the Needs of Persons with Co-occurring Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Disorders and required the **Mental Hygiene Administration** make recommendations regarding certain ways of delivering services.
- ✓ **House Bill 883**- Established the Health Care Services Disparities Prevention Act requiring the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** with the Maryland Healthcare Foundation to develop and implement a plan to reduce health care disparities.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 451**- Authorized the Maryland Health Care Foundation to provide support to programs that reduce health care disparities and required the Foundation develop certain criteria for awarding grants to programs, including maintaining a balance of geographic representation.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 809/House Bill 1184**- Established the Oral Health Program to prevent and detect oral cancer with a specified focus on the needs of high-risk underserved populations for whom dental services are not ordinarily available.

***This is a working list that will be updated on a monthly basis.**

For more information, please visit the [Maryland General Assembly website](#).